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State Agencies Partner With Intermountain Health Care to Promote Walking for Better Health

Salt Lake City (June 17, 2004) — Intermountain Health Care (IHC) health centers throughout the state will house information to help Utah citizens learn the how, why, and where of walking in Utah. IHC has agreed to distribute informational brochures provided by the Utah Department of Health (UDOH) and Utah Department of Transportation (UDOT) to encourage Utahns everywhere to take advantage of the summer season and establish a regular walking routine.

“We’re thrilled that IHC is distributing the brochures in its 26 health centers,” said Jane Lambert, MS, exercise physiology and community health specialist for the Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention Program at UDOH. “IHC is the perfect venue to deliver a message of health to the people of Utah.”

The brochure details effective walking practices and outlines the proven benefits of walking, such as reducing risks of heart disease and stroke. The brochure also includes maps that display Utah’s many easily accessible trail systems. Additionally, the brochure provides contact information of trail experts across the state and other important hotlines.

“IHC’s utmost concern is the health of Utah citizens,” said Tamara Lewis, MD, IHC’s director of community health. “We gladly agreed to issue the brochures because it gives us an opportunity to reinforce our emphasis on a healthy lifestyle.”

Walking is one of the most popular forms of physical activity among adults, and is known to combat obesity and other associated illnesses. According to a recent study released by Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, obesity is expected to become the leading cause of avoidable deaths within the next year, surpassing a death toll of 500,000. Walking reduces many of the health risks accompanying obesity:

- 50 percent less incidence of diabetes
- 30 – 40 percent reduction in the risk of heart disease
- 50 percent reduction in the risk of premature death
- 20 percent reduction in the risk of stroke

“We urge Utah citizens to learn the benefits of walking and implement a regular walking routine as a means of achieving health and wellness,” Lambert said.

UDOH, UDOT and IHC advise Utahns everywhere to visit their local IHC health centers for the information on walking. Utahns can also visit www.utahwalks.org or call the Health Resource Line at 1-888-222-2542. Visit www.ihc.com to locate an IHC Health Center near you.

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